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TURKEY.

Report regarding sanitary statistics.

BEIRUT, April 22, 1899.

SIR: In obedience to instructions contained in your dispatch No. 28, dated February 23, 1899, I have to-day forwarded to the Treasury Department my first weekly sanitary report.

It was a mistake on my part, which I beg you to excuse, to state in my dispatch acknowledging the receipt of the Department's Circular of October 31, 1898, that no sanitary statistics are published in Beirut. I should have said collected instead of published. Inquiries of the most earnest character from local American physicians and professors of medicine, from the hospitals, from the board of health, from the city doctor, from the governor-general, have been of no avail. Nobody knows even approximately the mortality of Beirut, or its causes. Nobody keeps any record of deaths or cases of sickness. The French Government receives occasional sanitary reports from a certain Dr. De Brun, who has been granted an annual allowance for this work, which, however, is limited to statements on the general health and sanitary condition of the city and vilayet. The vilayet publishes a brief monthly sanitary report, offering no statistics and only submitting a few general remarks, the reliability and usefulness of which may be questioned.

Being reluctant to confess my inability to carry out the instructions of the Department of State, I made a contract with the grave diggers of each cemetery (17 in all—4 Moslem, 2 Greek, 2 Catholic, 2 Maronite, 2 Protestant, 1 Latin, 1 Prussian, 1 Jewish, 1 Syraic, and 1 Druse) to furnish me, for a certain pecuniary consideration, the number of burials and the cause of death in each case during a given week. The result of this experiment I have now transmitted to the Treasury Department, but I regret to say that in many cases my representatives failed to obtain the desired information as to the prevailing diseases. If, for instance, a person had died from consumption or smallpox, the relatives of the deceased would be afraid to tell, suspecting that some harm might come to them, etc. The method is expensive and not altogether satisfactory in its results.

I beg to inclose a copy of my dispatch on the present topic to the governor-general and of his reply through the sanitary inspector of the vilayet.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

G. BIE RAVNDAL,
United States Consul.

The honorable the ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE.

[Inclosure.]

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Beirut, March 29, 1899.

To His Excellency Reshid Bey, governor-general of the vilayet of Beirut:

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to inform your excellency that my Government desires me to transmit to the Treasury Department weekly reports showing the number of cases of sickness and of deaths occurring in this city, resulting from various epidemic and other diseases.

To carry out these instructions I applied to the local board of health, but was told that no statistics of this kind are being collected. Said bureau was, therefore, unable to furnish this consulate any part of the desired information. I also asked the city physician if he could render me any assistance in the matter, but he replied that under

present conditions it is impossible to obtain official data concerning the sanitary condition of the city, as no system exists by virtue of which such data could be secured.

I am thus reduced, unless your excellency steps in, to the necessity of subsidizing the grave diggers of the various Moslem, Greek, Maronite, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Prussian, and French cemeteries, 16 or more in all, and perhaps also persons connected with the hospital, in order to ascertain approximately the mortality of the city and its causes.

I hope, however, through your excellency, to secure in a more satisfactory way a more satisfactory result. On August 9, 1898, this consulate received from the board of health of Beirut a letter in which it is stated that "the Imperial Government has directed us to keep as correct a register as possible of deaths in this city." The board therefore called the attention of this office to the necessity of obtaining an official permit for each burial, which would be given gratis. In every case the name, sex, age, nationality, religion of the deceased would be required, also the character of the sickness which caused his or her death, and finally the name of the physician employed, or the name of the hospital in which the death in question might have taken place.

I now have the honor to request your excellency to give such orders to the sanitary authorities of the vilayet which will carry into effect the policy of His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan's Government, as above referred to. I assure your excellency that any assistance you may kindly extend to this consulate in the matter under consideration will be highly appreciated by the American Government, as well as by me personally.

I seize this opportunity to assure your excellency of my highest consideration.

G. BIE RAVNDAL,
United States Consul.

[Inclosure—Translation.]

CORRESPONDENCE BUREAU,
Beirut Vilayet, April 6-18, 1899.

To the honorable consul of the American Government, Beirut.

HONORED AND ESTEEMED FRIEND: We received your letter dated March 29, 1899, in which you ask for official statistics respecting the number of deaths resulting from various diseases in this city.

Upon referring your communication to the sanitary inspector's department an answer was received to the effect that the authorities are not in duty bound to give such information to foreign consulates.

In the meantime there is no trace of any epidemic diseases here or in the outlying districts comprising this vilayet.

As regards the general sanitary condition in the vilayet the same is reported officially at the end of every month in the official gazette of the vilayet and reproduced by the local papers from which you will be able to obtain the intelligence relating to this matter.

We seize this opportunity to consolidate our relations of amity and friendship.

RESHID,
Vali of Beirut.